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AUTHOR	Klapan, Anita
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ABSTRACT

Educational needs of an adult as an individual and a social being form the bases of every educational activity and are an important issue of every discussion about adult education. If human needs are understood as the motivation, the specific energy that turns into striving to achieve an aim, or an expression of a lack, then it follows that educational needs are the motivator of every act of education. Understanding and respect of adult needs are preconditions of every conceptualization of adult education, of the theoretical foundation and practice. One main issue of adult education theory and practice is to dedicate special attention to the nature of educational needs and not only to the practical identification and analysis of educational needs as a condition for modeling adult education and practical performance of these models. In the very root of the question of the nature of educational needs is a more important question with its roots in the core of education itself. It is the question of the relationship between the individual and society. Educational needs of adults should be regarded as both human and societal needs. They should motivate and encourage individual development in accordance with social needs. The role of adult education theory and practice is to create the assumptions that people become aware of latent educational needs and remove obstacles to their fulfillment. Conceptualization of educational needs should be regarded as the key question of adult education theory and practice. (13-item bibliography) (YLB)

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ED 472 062

Ph.D. Anita Klapan

Faculty of Philosophy

Department of Pedagogy

RIJEKA

CROATIA

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EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE ADULTS – THE KEY QUESTION OF ANDRAGOGY

The paper deals with the issue of the educational needs as the key question of (re)conceptualization of the theory and practice of the educators of adults. These considerations point to the individual (subjective) and objective (social) nature of the educational needs of adults in the light of the anthropological understanding of education as the primary human function, and the understanding of the meaning in man-to-man relation, and of the social function accordingly. After this report, the educational needs of an adult, and primarily human needs for the development of the men's potential. They do not only submit to the criteria of the pragmatic establishment of needs in regard to the momentarily, contemporary needs of economic, social and cultural life as the necessity, where these needs come into realization. They are rather founded in direct and future needs of the adult's personality development, in accordance with the conditions and possibilities of realization and self-realization of personality.

(Summary)

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Besides numerous studies and discussions dedicated to the issues of human needs, which include educational needs, especially adult education needs, and besides theories and approaches to the problem which arise on those bases, it seems almost redundant to add another discussion which would emphasise some aspects or even new stanpoints in the sphere of the adult education needs. Despite many differences in theoretical foundations, methodologically-epistemological approach, the extension of the term of educational needs in general and the educational needs of adults, it is important to point out that there is a high level of agreement over the fact that the educational needs and the need for education make bases of every educational activity, and educational activity of an adult likevise. Furthermore, regardless of various understanding of the terms need and need for education, as well as of their structure, almost everybody who deals with the educational issue , and adult education in particular, believes that educational needs of an adult as an individual and social being make the bases of every educational activity, educational act , and that they are therefore an important and unomittable issue of every discussion about education and education of adults. If we understand human needs as the motivation power, as the most important motivational variable, specific energy which turns into a striving to achive the aim or as an expression of lack of the inner fulfilment of one's own "I" or of what is conditioned by the environment in which an individual works and lives, then the conclusion is that the educational needs are the motivator of every act of education. Needs are tightly connected to wishes, desires, strivings to reduce the lacks of some situation, to steady it and to bring it into the state of balance where an individual and a group will feel the neccessity to change the situation and to feel pleasure by doing it. In which way and how the changes will occur depends on how the entire situation in which the needs become visible is percieved. Because, as Murray pointed out, the needs are hypotetical powers which are brought about by inner processes or outward events which turn unsatisfying situation (scarcity) into satisfying situation (reduction of scarcity). The needs are made of cognitive, psychomotoric and affective elements, and are directed in their complexity to the objectives which are directly or indirectly connected with the realization of the

objectives. Therefore, taking different criteria into consideration, it is possible to discuss about various kinds of needs which are usually classified according to the varioous criteria into relatively homogenus classes of needs (e.g. primary and secundary, organic, psychological, social). There is a very extensive spectre of human needs which provides various classifications according to various criteria, but in the same time hinders the existence of a complementary and coherent systematization and classification. Naturally, educational needs as an aspect of human needs take an impotrant place in every discussion which deala with these needs. Strivings that a human being as an individual or as a member of various groups (social being) humanizes his or her personality overcoming many lacks that stand on his or her way to humanization, bring us into the sphere of human needs. The educational needs make only one segment within that complex, multidimensional and multi-layered issue. They are directed towards biological, psychological, social, anthropological, economic and other dimensions which define the core of educational needs, their extent, multiple conditioning, ways of occuring and manifastation. The multidimensionality of educational needs, their place within the hyerarchy (from biological and physiological needs to needs for selfrealization and selfactualization – Maslow) and multiple conditioning and connection, their realization as an expression of human biological, anthropological and social nature, their developmental dimension (structure change, change of intensity and way of manifestation during development of a personality) lead to the realisation that understanding and respect of needs and educational needs likevise is the precondition of the successful educational work at all levels and in all segments. Therefore, understanding and respect of adult needs (which arise from their biological , antrophological and social nature) are the preconditions of every conceptualization of adult education, of the theoretical foundation and practice. One of the main questions of the adult education theory and practice is therefore to dedicate special attention to the nature of educational needs, their comprehensive examination and analysis, and not only to practical identification and analysis of educational needs as a condition for modeling adult education and practical performance of these models. When in educational needs in general, and

especially in the adult education, there is some aspect of educational need pointed as dominant (individually-biological, psychological, socially-cultural or some other), regardless of its possible fulfillment, there occurs separation of inseparable human nature to the individual and the social being. To neglect complementary and entire examination of educational needs of adults in the context of basic epistemological, theoretically-methodological and practical questions of the education of adults means in the same time to yield to voluntarism, pragmatism, improvisation and uncertainty in regard to the adult education as fulfillment of motives, strivings and interest in their development and selfdevelopment. This is the trace to search the core and meaning of examination of educational needs. Despotović has right in his book of the symbolic name "Game of Needs - Adult Education Variations", when he points out: "Besides discussing needs, especially educational needs, as subjective lacks, they can be discussed as completely objective lack, discreepancy between the existing, achieved on one side and desirable, normative, demanding state which is established by some system, group or individual." (Despotović, 2000, p16). In the very root of the question of the nature of educational needs, i.e. their individual and antropological foundation on one side and the social conditioning on the other side, and in the same time deetermination and indetermination of educational needs with former or latter structural element, there is a more important question which has its roots in the core of the education itself, in the nature of the phenomenon, especially in the aspect of consideration and solving of the archaic question of relationship between an individual and the social community, and the way of dealing with the problem. In other words, the question of relationship between the individual and the society, i.e. the human being as unique entity and a member of the society (although both can be understood in various ways), caused the separation in the educational practice and in the philosophy of education and sciences which deal with the phenomenon. The question of what is primary in the education – individual or social community – separated the approach in two opposite orientations: individualistic and social, with different variants on both sides. Naturally, the attempts to find the compromise between these two opposite orientations are expressed it the attitude that education is

in the same time both individual function of development of an individual, and the social function, solved the dilemma. Education as social function can be examined within anthropological understanding, first of all as education is primarily human function of development and humanization of a human being, and then by it a social function as well. Education is trully realised as interhuman interaction on the human – to –human relation, and then necessarily in social relations (of social groups and institutions), which defines the assumptions and frameworks for the realization of education as formation, transformation, and first of all selfformation of a human being. The anthropological aspect does not mean the negation of social function of education, because they are possible out of society, but the warning that a society as an institutionalized system, with its "pressure function" can significantly hinder selfrealization of an individual as a human being. For that reason, when we talk about education as primarily human and social function, we think of a society which will create conditions for the realization of education as an interhuman relationship in the society as pleasant action-existing environment for a human being as an individual, where he or she lives as a free, creative being which changes society and its institutions "to his or her own shape", and forms , shapes, and educates himself or herself. It seems that in the anthropological sense of understanding of the education we should also examine the educational needs, especially the educational needs of adults. Insisting on whether the educational needs are of primarily social (objective) or individually-psychological (subjective) origin seems redundant for the discussion. Doubts are also driven by the attempts to reconcile this opposite attitudes when dealing with human and educatioanl needs of adults, for example: "Needs are defined as a process of broader motivational sphere the fulfillment of which or unfulfillment of which has an impact over behaviour of social groups and individuals. Needs in adult education are also defined as dinamic processes of objectively-subjective reflections of reality and motivational force of development of the society and individuals." (Savičević, 1989, p106).

It is probably generaly assumed that educational needs of the adults are socially conditioned (and determined), and that their social function (function of the social

development) is in the same time the individual function of development of an individual, or that in the manifestation and fulfilment of educatioanl needs there is no difference between individual and social needs. Moreover, in the examination of the educational needs of adults, the education of adults is too much oriented to the examination of the concrete educational needs fulfilment which would solve the concrete problems of the training of adults to performe work according to social needs. In other words, by fulfilling educational needs, gaps in the needed knowledge and skills would be overcame with the individuals and groups who did not previoously acquire the competence needed for living and working, or with individuals who, because of the scientific-technological and social changes, need additional education. Therefore, the examination of the educational needs and their fulfilment within the system of the education of adults had primarily compensational function perplexed with utilitarism and pragmatism of the adult education. Naturally, the education of adults which had the compensation function with educational goods that stand for the "lack of education" of different extent and on various levels was not dirrected to those who went through education for their own inner human need, or the so-called "education for one's own soul", free of pragmatism and necessity.

Educational needs of adults should be basically and primarily regarded as primarily human needs of an adult, and societal needs as well. Only on that basis can the educational needs of adults be functional in the individual development. They should motivate and encourage individual development in accordance with social needs. Where are the limits of that? We could say, the limit of the social needs is personal happiness and individual satisfaction, and limit of the individual is the social need, social neccessity. For the alineation of of the educational needs of adults we should take into consideration larger conception, the adult education philosophy, in the context of the examination of the basic issues of development of a human being, the possibilities of their development and liberation of their potentials, in which education – and education of adults in that sense – can be the factor of humanization and

liberation in the enslaved world in which the individual exists. Educational needs of adults should, in that sense, be regarded in the context of the subjective and objective sources and factors which condition and define needs, as conditions and possibilities for fulfilment of needs for education. In that way, the needs would not submit to pragmatically-utilitarian or false humanistic criteria, neirther in their examination and presentation nor in their fulfillment.

The realization and selfrealization of an adult can be achieved through diferentiated and individualized approach to the educational needs, founded on demands and didactically-methodical solutions that make basis of various forms and models of the adult education, especially in conditions in which the diferentiation and individualization of the educational needs is the basic variable of the adult education theory and practice. If we go from personal needs, possibilities and conditions in which adult education occurs, it does not mean that we oppose to the needs which arise from the social conditions and demands. But in fulfiling educational needs adults do not always need to adapt to scientifically-technological and working-productional conditions, socio-cultural and generally social and other changes to be able, as it is often pointed out, to follow the trends of development and be in function of these changes. Educational needs cannot be imposed on adults. The one who launches into the job gaines the status of the "human souls engineer" who, through the educational needs or with their fulfilment tries to manipulate and shape people's consciousness. Education of adults can be conceptualized in a way that it enables the integration of adults in the educational process, first of all on the bases of individual needs, with the aim to fulfill their motives, interests and needs. In a process of education of such a conception adults become aware of and examine their needs, and that serves as a base for the structuration of objectives and concepts of education, strategies, methods and procedures of the individual development. Naturally, it is all alineated to the social needs, possibilities and conditions of the "actual" and "future" development. However, we should not forget that many educational needs can latently exist with

people, without people being aware of them. Therefore, the role of the adult education theory and practice is to create the assumptions that people become aware of the latent educational needs, to create the assumptions and remove possible obstacles for their fulfilment so that they can be visible. The question is whether in discours like this there is examination of the educational needs of adults of illusionatory expectations or this is the real perspective off adult education. This is especially truth in conditions when the higly developed technological societies are in the same time "working societies" with all the consequences that follow societies organized in such a way, where the adaptation of behavior to scientifically-technological changes is a desirable feature, measure and standard to be achieved. In such conditions, the examination and defining of the educationall needs should only serve as a means of explaining the adapted behavior of each individual in regard to the social structure and relations. Adult education understood in this way is only a suitable place for the adaptation to the changes so that the adults become "socially useful" or "socially efficient". Such understanding, which is present in the examination of the educational needs of adults and on which the conception of the practical performance of the education is based, has some followers, but it is questionable who defines the criteria for defining the social ussefulness for individuals and groups, who defines the educational needs often claiming that social needs are also individual needs. Therefore, in the light of the "industrially-andragoggical"paradigme logic it is believed that in the sphere of the adult education it is necessary to examine what is wanted, what are the educational needs, what are the objectives given to the "users of educcational goods", to find the optimal models, and then to choose the technology which will fulfill defined objectives and examined educational needs. If in any educational sphere it is primarily important to go from the individual, from his or her individual features and needs, then the objectives and contents of education should be defined using diferentiated and individualized forms; then it is the process of the adult education.

Conceptualization of educational needs should be regarded as the key question of the adult education theory and practice, and in that sense, as an important element, the

important variable of democratization of the processes. It is in the same time important variable of democratization of the social structure and realtions in the transformation of which we cannot neglect the pragmatized social reality, actual conditions and possibilities, and perspectives of the social development in which the education of adults is the factor of the social development, and not the loyal follower of social changes. Democratization of education is now evident, and in the future it will be even more evident in findings, awareness and encouragement of educational needs of the adults, which are based on the individualization and diferentiation of the educational needs, as the starting point and the target for the best possible realization and selfactualization of a human being as an individual and member of social groups. Educational needs of adults should be presented in such a way that they do not arise only from actual, even "future", imagined needs of the scientifically-technological and socially-economical growth and development, but they must arise from individual motives and needs of individuals and groups by which can be realized and selfrealized their creative potentials in which the "educational good" which is offered and which the adults choose will be in the same time their good according to the authentic human nature and inner need.

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